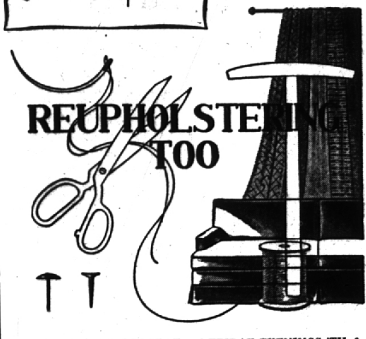


Bridge Crackdown Nets 1st Vandal.

BLOOMFIELD HILLS—Nineteen-year-old Richard D. Viers of Royal Oak is the first victim

of Bloomfield Hills police department's crackdown on Trowbridge bridge vandals. Viers Friday was fined \$35 for dumping rubbish over the bridge railing on the Grand Trunk tracks. He also had to pick up the rubbish.

Scott-Shuptrine



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Property Tax System Discussed by Expert

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following speech on state property taxation was recently given by Thomas E. Hurns to the Birmingham Women's club.
It will be presented as a series in the next three issues of The Birmingham Eccentric.
Hurns recently retired as vice president of Detroit Edison and is recognized as a top authority on tax and accounting problems. He is past president of the national assn. of cost accountants and organized the Detroit chapter of the tax executives' institute.
By THOMAS E. HURNS

There is nothing lovelier, more lovable, or at times, more exasperating than the American woman. Television's honeymooner, Ralph Cramden, has been threatening Alice with a trip to the moon for several years, but the honeymooner always makes up and Alice loses her chance for an eventful voyage. With the advent of the Sputniks, the Muttniks and the Ikeniks, Alice's chances of making that trip have improved. Elsa Maxwell is not the only woman who has volunteered for the first space ride to the moon. I predict that in the years to come the American woman will contribute her share to the accomplishment of space travel.

At the same time this unlimited opportunity for accomplishment arises, she is met with anguished cries from Washington, Lansing, Birmingham and other cities, villages and townships, that we are at or near to going broke and that the taxpayer must lighten her belt, at the same time cautioning that there is no need to worry and that she will get by without great hardship.
Thus, she must face the everyday problems of existing; at the same time new and marvelous opportunities are thrust upon her. To put it another way—while her head's in the moon, she has got to keep her feet on the ground.

IN THIS Sputnik age, hysterics, impulse and ill-informed judgment can lead us into serious trouble. But if we become well informed, and act only after careful consideration of all of the facts, we can answer the cries of anguish with common sense solutions, as we have done in the past.
The demands of government for more money, combined with spiraling inflation, has caused taxation to be a leading subject of the day. Particularly in this true of ad valorem taxation in Michigan. As you will know, "ad valorem" is an old Latin phrase meaning "to the value." It is therefore not surprising to find that our state constitution requires that all assessments "shall be on property at its cash value."

General property taxes were the principal sources of revenue for state and local governments up to 1900. Since that time, most state governments have abandoned property taxes in favor of income, sales and franchise taxes. Michigan abandoned property taxes for state purposes in 1956, turning to the general 3% sales and use taxes. Recently, the business activities tax and corporate franchise tax have become additional substantial sources of state income.

HOWEVER, the general property tax remains the backbone of our counties, cities, townships, villages and school districts.
On the face of it, one would think that the property tax would be

very easily determined. Simply multiply a tax base times a rate and there is your property tax. Unfortunately, the process is not so simple. Let's start from the beginning and see how your property tax comes about.
First, what is being taxed? The law broadly requires all real and personal property to be taxed. Real property includes land, buildings, construction in progress, standing timber, mines and minerals and anything that is relatively fixed to the land. Personal property includes all movable property such as ships, automobiles, furniture, machinery and equipment, merchandise and the like.
Automobiles are exempt from the property tax because of specific tax paid for license plates. Stocks, bonds, accounts receivable, bank deposits and cash in hand are not subject to property taxes because of the specific intangibles tax paid on them. You are all familiar with Governor William's suggestion to increase state revenues by increasing the intangibles tax rate on cash in the bank.

THERE ARE a number of other items, such as aircraft, forest reserves, oil and gas, watercraft, which are specially taxed and therefore exempt from the property tax. Because of a \$5,000 exemption and the difficulty of administration, the personal property of householders has seldom been taxed. Hence, the personal property tax falls primarily upon business and industry.
A great deal of real and personal property is not taxed because of the character of the owner. Property belonging to the United States, to the state of Michigan or any political subdivision thereof, to charitable, educational and scientific institutions, libraries, church and religious societies, scout organizations, 4-H clubs, YMCA, veterans' organizations, banks, trust companies, hospitals and similar organizations are exempt from tax.
In addition, certain specific property is exempt. Agricultural products in storage, materials and goods in public warehouses, cem-



Stretching a Point

Summer days don't drag for young people who dart over to Birmingham high school every weekday morning for junior sports. Under the guidance of the program's co-director Janie Delahanty, (from left) John Radtke, Morrey Weinner, Dave

Patrick and Bob Filter stretch their bows and aim for a bull's eye. Steve May is also co-director of the daily program at the high school, sponsored by the Birmingham recreation department.

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